Chapter

17

Promoting National Identity: The Role of Individuals, Groups, and Governments

How do you show your support for a nation of which you are a part? How do you show support for what you believe about being Canadian? How do other people that you know show support for causes about which they feel strongly? Identifying with a political party and voting for that party may be viewed as one way that citizens of Canada actively support their view of the nation-state. In what other ways do people promote national identity? How, for example, are symbols and myths used in promoting national identity?

Explore the national symbols that are associated with Canada; for example those shown in Figure 17-1. Discuss in groups which symbol you think best represents Canada and why.

Figure 17-1

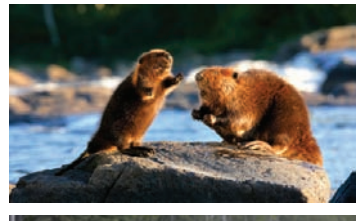
What other symbols of Canadian identity can you think of?

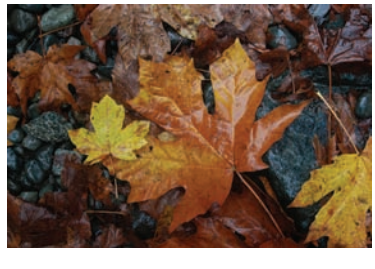
Chapter Issue

To what extent do individuals, groups, and governments promote a national identity?

In this chapter you will explore how individuals, groups and governments promote national identity through such means as symbolism, mythology, institutions, and government programs and initiatives. The following inquiry questions will be used to guide your exploration:

- How do individuals and groups promote a national identity?
- How do institutions and governments promote a national identity?





SKILL PATH

Collaborating to Solve Problems

When tackling an assignment, pooling information and resources as a group can make the job easier and your end product better; however, each group member is responsible for ensuring that the people in their group work well together. Use the ideas from this Skill Path to help make your group work effective and rewarding for all.

Step 1 **Team Building and Trust**

One of the main barriers to good team development and sharing is an absence of trust. In his book *Winning with People*, renowned speaker and author on leadership John C. Maxwell writes

Trust begins with YOURSELF

You need to be honest with yourself before you may successfully work with others … this will allow you to give and accept constructive feedback gracefully, while participating when necessary rather than when convenient.

Trust cannot be compartmentalized

You cannot turn trust on and off. You need to be consistent and to demonstrate to your group members that you are worthy of their trust … expecting others to want to work with you in the group after failing them in another class or in a previous assignment is not realistic.

Trust works like a BANK ACCOUNT

As a group member you need to do things that add to the level of trust others have for you. When participating, the more positive contributions you have made, the greater the bank balance in your relationship with peers, and vice versa. Be sure to put more into your team's bank than you take out to avoid bankruptcy![1]

Step 2 **Use a Talking Circle**

A *talking circle* is a traditional Aboriginal tool that allows people to share their knowledge and ideas in a respectful and organized manner. This description of a talking circle is from the Mi'kmaq Spirit website:

Everyone sits in a circle, generally with men to the North and women to the South. The conductor of the circle will generally sit in the East. A token, such as a feather or a special talking stick, is passed clockwise around the circle. As each person receives the token, they may speak for as long as they wish, including addressing a topic brought up by another in the circle. When they have finished, they pass the token along. If someone does not wish to speak, they simply pass the token. The token may go around several times; when everyone has had the opportunity to speak as many times as they wish, the conductor ends the circle.[2]

Figure 17-2 ▲

A talking circle

Step 3 **Create an Action Plan**

Once your group has discussed the topic and shared information and ideas, it is time for you to create an action plan that addresses such questions as:

- Who will do what?
- What resources will you need?
- What timeline will you follow to meet the deadline?
- What will the final product look like?

1 John Maxwell, *Winning with People* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), pp. 126–128.

2 from http://www.muiniskw.org/pgCulture2c.htm

Practise It!

In a group:

a) Discuss the common myths and symbols linked to national identity in Canada. Conduct research to expand your knowledge and understanding of these myths and symbols.

b) Create your own symbol and slogan to represent Canadian national identity. Write a paragraph in which you explain what your symbol means.

c) Identify the single most significant myth in Canada's history. Describe why you selected it as the most significant, and what you think it represents.

Symbols and Stories of National Identity

Question for Inquiry

- **How do individuals and groups promote a national identity?**

Symbols are often used to represent ideas or qualities. Within nations, they are often used to promote national pride and unity. You may identify with particular individuals, political parties, or other groups because you relate to their representation of a national identity. Myths—those traditional and idealized or imagined stories about past events—attempt to inform a common understanding; they are also sometimes used to promote national pride and unity. The following statement by "Joe" was part of a series of Canadian beer commercials that ran on television several years ago.

Pause and Reflect

Stereotyping individuals and groups involves oversimplifying ideas about or images of them. What are some Canadian stereotypes?

Hey.
I'm not a lumberjack,
or a fur trader …
and I don't live in an igloo
or eat blubber, or own a dogsled …
and I don't know Jimmy, Sally or Suzy from Canada,
although I'm certain they're really, really nice.

I have a Prime Minister,
not a President.
I speak English and French,
NOT American.
and I pronounce it ABOUT,
NOT A BOOT.

I can proudly sew my country's flag on my backpack.
I believe in peace keeping, NOT policing.
DIVERSITY, NOT assimilation,
AND THAT THE BEAVER IS A TRULY PROUD AND NOBLE ANIMAL.
A TOQUE IS A HAT,
A CHESTERFIELD IS A COUCH,
AND IT IS PRONOUCED 'ZED' NOT 'ZEE,' 'ZED'!

CANADA IS THE SECOND LARGEST LANDMASS!
THE FIRST NATION OF HOCKEY!
AND THE BEST PART OF NORTH AMERICA!
MY NAME IS JOE!
AND I AM CANADIAN![3]

What Canadian myths and symbols do you recognize in this speech? What do you think is the purpose of this speech? Who is the intended audience? What is your reaction to this statement by "Joe"?

Some well-known individuals in Canada, such as Terry Fox, represent certain values for Canadians and sometimes take on the power of symbols and myths. Politicians, sports heroes, entertainers, authors, captains of industry, and activists may also become national symbols or part of a national mythology. Organizations, political parties, companies, and products often associate themselves with national myths and symbols to create, develop, or improve their image.

Symbols of national identity can heighten people's awareness of being members of a nation, and can allow people to celebrate who they are as a people. Symbols such as songs can connect people across great expanses of land and time. Official symbols depicting national identity in Canada—such as the flag, the national anthem, and Canada Day—may be easy to list. A different kind of symbol may be Canada's role in peacekeeping.

For those who love dance, a symbol of national identity may be linked to the world-famous National Ballet of Canada, while for others it may be Canada's stature in the world of literature, due to the works of authors such as Robertson Davies and Timothy Findley (whose works have become international bestsellers), Margaret Atwood and Michael Ondaatje (whose novels have won international awards), and Alice Munro, who has been dubbed "the best living writer of short stories in the English language."[4]

Similarly, mythologies—or collections of myths and stories—can contribute to shaping national identity. For instance, for First Nations,

Fast Facts

There are currently more than 15 federal political parties in Canada today, each trying to present a different image of what Canada is or should be. Here are some of them:

Animal Alliance Environment Voters Party of Canada
Bloc Québécois
Canadian Action Party
Christian Heritage Party of Canada
Communist Party of Canada
Conservative Party of Canada
First Peoples National Party of Canada
Green Party of Canada
Liberal Party of Canada
Libertarian Party of Canada
Marijuana Party
Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada
New Democratic Party
Progressive Canadian Party
neorhino.ca
Western Block Party

Do the competing images of these federal parties add to or undermine Canada's national identity as each party attempts to appeal to voters?

Pause and Reflect

What mythologies, stories, or imaginings about Canada help us understand who we are and who we want to be?

3 From: http://home7.swipnet.se/~w-72891/CanadianClub/CCsales/ad.html

4 Aida Edemariam, "Riches of a Double Life," *The Guardian*, 4 October 2003. http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/generalfiction/story/0,,1055426,00.html.

Pause and Reflect

Why do so many Canadians identify so strongly with professional sports teams and events? What need does being a fan fulfill?

the oral tradition of passing on creation stories serves as a means of maintaining and fostering a national identity; for Acadians, it may be stories about their Expulsion.

Sports and Canadian Identity

For many Canadians, sports are a source of legends and provide a potent symbol of Canadian national identity.

As a Canadian, fan or not, it is difficult to avoid the media frenzy surrounding the Grey Cup game or the Stanley Cup finals. Some would say that sports are a fundamental component of identity in Canada. On 16 February 2004, the CBC broadcast of "Canada's greatest hockey triumph"—game eight of the 1972 Summit Series between Canada and Russia—was dubbed a "national treasure" and designated one of 12 Masterworks so that it would be preserved for future generations to watch.[5]

For many, this series forms a Canadian legend. According to one description:

> *For Canadians, the Summit Series was intended to be a celebration of their global supremacy in ice hockey. The architects of Soviet hockey, on the other hand, had designs on surprising Canada and the world with their skill and claiming the Canadian game as their own. Over the course of the month, the games captured the imagination of both nations. Far beyond any hockey match, the series pitted East against West—communism against capitalism—and many of the players were swept away with the extra-sporting significance that the games had engendered. What was to be a friendly contest became instead a politically charged event with extensive cultural repercussions—quite literally, a Cold War.*[6]

Figure 17-3

At a ceremony at the Royal Canadian Mint, in Ottawa in 1997, team Canada's 1972 hockey greats Yvan Cournoyer (left) and Paul Henderson, along with Russian goaltender Vladislav Tretiak, display commemorative silver dollar coins marking the 25th anniversary of Canada's victory over the Soviet Union in the 1972 Canada Cup.

Not everyone feels the same way about the continued celebration of the series, however. In a blog entry entitled "Thank-You Team Canada '72. Now Please Go Away," Jamie Fitzpatrick, a broadcaster and freelance sports writer in St. John's, Newfoundland, wrote:

> *Is anybody else tired of 1972, the Summit Series, Paul Henderson and the rest of it?*
>
> *(Apologies to those not obsessed with Canadian hockey. Briefly: In 1972, Canada and the Soviet Union play an eight-game series, the first meeting between their top players. When all seems lost, the good guys storm back for the slimmest of victories, thanks to true Canadian heart*

5 CBC Sports, "1972 Summit Series Broadcast Being Preserved," 17 February 2004. http://www.cbc.ca/sports/story/2004/02/16/masterworks040216.html.

6 Abstract for the article by J.J. Wilson, "27 Remarkable Days: The 1972 Summit Series of Ice Hockey between Canada and the Soviet Union," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 5, no. 2 (Autumn 2004): 271–280. http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/routledg/tmp/2004/00000005/00000002/art00005.

and grit, blah, blah, blah. It goes down as Canada's version of the Miracle on Ice. If you want more, several websites are devoted to reliving the glory …) … I'm all for preserving history. But Canada-USSR '72 was hardly the greatest hockey series ever. Not even close. Yes, it was historic. Yes, it was dramatic. Yes, the country stood still. Yes, they were all conquering heroes.

Now that we're all agreed, can we shelve the endless baby boomer nostalgia, give 1972 a rest and move on?[7]

Pause and Reflect

Should the Summit Series of 1972 be seen as a Canadian legend? Should professional hockey be seen as a defining feature of Canadian national identity? Should it be part of our national mythology? Why or why not?

The Richard Riot: More than Just a Riot?

What impact did Montreal Canadiens hockey player Maurice "Rocket" Richard and the Richard Riot have on national identity in Canada?

Who was Maurice "Rocket" Richard? The list of Richard's legendary achievements is long. He was the first player to score 50 goals in a season, and the first to score 500 goals in a career; 50 goals in 50 games is still a marker of scoring excellence that few achieve today. During the 1944–1945 season, after moving furniture all day (including a piano), Richard scored 5 goals and 3 assists for his team in an NHL record-setting 9-1 victory over the Detroit Red Wings. In 1952, an injured Richard, blood dripping down his face, scored the winning goal of the Stanley Cup series; he received a four-minute-long standing ovation, the longest in the history of the Montréal Forum. When he died in 2000, many honours were bestowed on him. Flags were lowered to half-mast in the Québec Assembly, 115 000 people paid their respects, and Richard was given a state funeral broadcast across Canada—the first time such an honour was given to an athlete.

Figure 17-4 ▲

Louis Bosse of Montréal reflects by a statue of Maurice Richard in front the arena bearing his name on Saturday, 27 May 2000, after hearing of the death of the hockey legend.

On 17 March 1955, thousands of hockey fans exploded and went on a seven-hour looting and vandalism spree in what was to become known as the *Richard Riot*. Their actions were a reaction to NHL President Clarence Campbell's decision to suspend Maurice "Rocket" Richard for the next three league games and for the entire playoffs. Richard had smashed his stick over another player and punched an official in the face after being high-sticked three days earlier in a game in Boston. The decision was almost unbearable for the fans of the Montréal Canadiens, as Richard was on his way to a scoring title while leading the team to the Stanley Cup.

7 Jamie Fitzpatrick, "Thank-You Team Canada '72. Now Please Go Away," *Jamie's Hockey Blog*, 9 April 2006. http://proicehockey.about.com/b/a/255864.htm.

In a news story reflecting on the riot, reporter Patricia Zacharias wrote:

Montrealers were livid; how dare Campbell remove Richard for the rest of the season? He was a national hero and should be afforded some leeway.[8]

Journalist and author Monte Stewart, in his book *Great Right Wingers: Stars of Hockey's Golden Age*, wrote:

Just as many people can remember where they were when Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, or when Wayne Gretzky was traded to the Los Angeles Kings from the Edmonton Oilers, many Montrealers can remember where they were—and what happened to them—the night of the Richard Riot.

Stewart cites Camil Desroches, a long-time Canadiens publicity director, as saying that, "for French people … he was our flag. We didn't have a flag. We had Maurice Richard."[9]

Sheldon Posen, Curator of Canadian Folklore at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, had this to say:

The Canadian Museum of Civilization is not in the business of presenting exhibitions about professional athletes; that is the realm of sports halls of fame. However, we are in the business of telling the stories of ordinary Canadians, and that includes the way that sports fit into our lives.

As a folklorist, my idea of a hockey treasure is the Eaton's or Dupuis catalogue that someone's grandfather stuffed in his socks for a shin pad when he played shinny on the slough. As a result, when it comes to Maurice Richard's Number 9 sweater, the real point to me is how Canadians react to it. What it is that turns an old, patched, red, blue, and white wool jersey into a revered relic that summons up—for those who understand its power—a man, a sport, a place, a time, and a heightened sense of who they are and what they've come through. If someone doesn't already see all that, then it's my job to help them see it."[10]

1. After reviewing the passages above, assess how you think events linked to Maurice Richard and the Richard Riot affected the perspectives of French Canadians with regard to national identity.
2. How does the "legend" of Maurice Richard affect the perspective of non-French Canadians with regard to national identity?
3. Through a class or group discussion, explore how and why hockey players like Maurice Richard become national figures. What qualities and ideas do they represent to Canadians? What does this reveal about national identity in Canada?

Figure 17-5

A crowd estimated at about 10 000 people took part in a demonstration outside the Montréal Forum against NHL President Clarence Campbell on 17 March 1955. Campbell, who was present at the game taking place inside, had earlier suspended Canadien hero Maurice "Rocket" Richard for the rest of the season and from post-season play.

8 Patricia Zacharias, "The Hockey Game that Broke Out during a Riot," *The Detroit News*, 5 February 1996. http://info.detnews.com/history/story/index.cfm?id=56&category=sports.

9 Monte Stewart, *Great Right Wingers: Stars of Hockey's Golden Age* (Canmore, AB: Altitude Publishing, 2006), pp. 91–92.

10 Sheldon Posen, "'Rocket' Richard: The Legend—The Legacy." http://www.civilization.ca/media/docs/fsrck02e.html.

Making a Statement to the World: The Olympics

Canada has been recognized internationally as a dominant force in many Olympic events. In each sporting venue there is the potential for Canadians from all walks of life to rally together to support fellow citizens. What is your reaction to Canada's participation in these types of events, and how has the performance of Canadian athletes affected your sense of being Canadian?

The reality for Olympic athletes is that there is tremendous pressure on them to represent the country in a way that will reflect the national identity of Canada and make Canadians proud. Since 1988, there has been much controversy surrounding Canada's selection of a flag-bearer.

Eric Michalko, Media Relations Manager for the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC), wrote this for the 18 January 2006 COC press conference to clarify the flag-bearer selection process:

The selection of Canada's flag bearer is based on a number of factors including an athlete's sporting awards and achievements, involvement in the community, status as a role model for Canadians and representation of the Olympic values and ideals.[11]

The importance of making the right choice is clear and there has often been controversy surrounding who should be chosen. Sports writer Bill Beacon wrote the following in the *Ottawa Citizen*:

The flag-bearer selection at the 1988 Winter Games was a public relations and athletic disaster. Barely a word of French was spoken at the announcement and the outrage from Québec left both the Canadian Olympic Association and the Liberal government in Ottawa red-faced. Also, the flag bearer in Nagano, freestyle skier Jean-Luc Brassard, only learned of his selection a day before the ceremonies. He later complained that carrying the flag hurt his performance, as his was one of the first events up on the Olympic schedule.[12]

Bobsledder Pierre Lueders, cross-country skier Beckie Scott, and speed skaters Clara Hughes and Cindy Klassen all asked their associations not to nominate them for the ceremonial role in the 2006 Turin Olympics.

1. In groups or as a class, debate the following: The fact that some athletes do not want to carry the Canadian flag at the opening ceremonies is unpatriotic. Discuss whether or not an individual has a choice in becoming a national symbol.
2. Compare the Government of Canada's financial support for high-performance athletes with the support given by other countries on a per capita basis. Follow the link on the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website to a site that can help you with your comparison. How much should the Canadian government support Olympic athletes? How important are Olympic athletes in helping to promote a national identity in Canada?
3. Other than Olympic athletes, what individuals come to mind when you think of people who have affected your view of Canadian national identity? Make a list, and provide reasons for your choices. Share your list with a small group.

Figure 17-6 ▲

The Olympic symbol of five interlaced rings was designed in 1913. The five rings represent the five major continents. At least one of the five colours appeared on each national flag of the world's nations at that time.

Figure 17-7 ▲

Catriona Le May Doan carried the Canadian flag leading the Canadian team into the Rice-Eccles Olympic Stadium during the opening ceremonies for the XIX Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City, Utah, 2002.

11 Eric Michalko, "Canadian Olympic Committee Clarifies Flag Bearer Selection Process," 18 January 2006. http://www.olympic.ca/EN/organization/news/2006/0118.shtml.

12 Bill Beacon, "World Champion Kayaker Caroline Brunet Is Canada's Flag-Bearer for Sydney," *Ottawa Citizen*, 17 August 2000. http://www.caaws.ca/olympics/2000/cankayak/flag_aug17.htm.

Fast Facts

According to the Canadian Olympic Committee:
The Government of Canada is the single largest investor in Canada's sport system. More than $140 million is provided annually for initiatives to support our high-performance athletes and to promote sport excellence and participation among Canadians.[13]

This section has explored the role of sports in general and of the Olympics in particular as symbols and myths shaping a common Canadian identity. For your friends, family, and members of your community who are not sports fans, what symbols and myths related to Canadian identity do you think would be most important? Can you identify symbols and myths that particular groups within Canada might find compelling in terms of shaping national identity? Should the government do more to help develop a common national identity?

First Nations and National Identity

In addition to the contributions of individuals working together in organizations such as political parties and national sports associations, First Nations groups have demonstrated that they too contribute to the stories of a nation. The actions, for example, of the Kanien'kehá:ka [gun-yung-gay-HAH-gah] (Six Nations Mohawk) in the conflict over land at Oka, have had a great impact on perceptions of national identity for First Nations and others. As you read through the following Investigation, consider what role the events at Oka may have played in shaping your own views on national identity.

INVESTIGATION

Oka: Crisis Contributing to Identity

Something to Think About: When a group feels threatened, either from within or from without, the result can be a heightened sense of solidarity. To what extent did the Oka Crisis contribute to both Kanien'kehá:ka and other First Nations' sense of national identity?

An Example: The *Oka Crisis* refers to the situation that unfolded in the summer of 1990, in the town of Oka, 60 kilometres west of Montréal. A planned condominium expansion to a golf complex on land claimed by the neighbouring Kanien'kehá:ka community of Kanestake would have encircled an Aboriginal cemetery. After Kanien'kehá:ka protesters set up barricades in the pine-forested area and hostilities between the Oka and Kanestake communities escalated, the *Sûreté du Québec* (the Québec provincial police) moved in. In the turmoil that followed, a corporal was killed. Kanien'kehá:ka south of Montréal also blocked the Mercier Bridge, used by 70 000 suburban commuters to and from Montréal, causing traffic jams. Eventually, the RCMP and then the armed forces were sent in. After 78 days, the

Web Link

For audio, visual, and text overviews of the Oka Crisis, follow the links on the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website.

13 Canadian Olympic Committee, "Canada's New Government Announces the Creation of Podium Canada," 24 November 2006. http://www.olympic.ca/EN/organization/news/2006/1124.shtml.

Oka Crisis ended, when negotiations led to the reopening of the Mercier Bridge and Kanien'kehá:ka took down the barricades and burned their guns. The proposed golf course expansion was cancelled, and as part of a new First Nations policing policy, Kanien'kehá:ka peacekeepers became the sole patrollers on the reserve after an agreement with Québec.

A Newspaper Excerpt:

It was 10 years ago July 11 that the most acute Aboriginal crisis in modern times in Canada began. The 78-day Oka crisis left lingering bitterness between Mohawks and their neighbours. But at the same time, Oka would become a turning point, hauling into a broader consciousness native grievances that had long simmered away from public attention.

"I look at Oka as a victory, a victory for native rights," said Kenneth Deer, editor of the Mohawk newspaper The Eastern Door. *"In the end, the governments had to listen to us."*

He mentioned recent native gains such as the unprecedented powers provided in the Nisga'a treaty or creation of the northern territory of Nunavut. "Look at Nunavut, there wouldn't be a Nunavut, without Oka. We had to suffer for other people's gains." Oka inspired Aboriginal people all over Canada.

"It made me feel better to be native. I felt stronger," said Barney McLeod, an Ojibwa sculptor living in Vancouver, who quit his construction job in Toronto during the crisis and drove all night to deliver canned food to Kahnawake. "A lot of people felt sorry for themselves for being native. But after Oka, native people became prouder and stronger."[14]

A Government Minister:

John Ciaccia, who served as Québec's Native Affairs Minister during the 1990 Oka Crisis, says the harrowing standoff could have been averted had the federal government heeded his advice about Kanien'kehá:ka land claims:

"The Warriors wanted the army," said Ciaccia, "because then they could say they were fighting nation against nation, the Mohawk army against the Canadian army … They played it for all it was worth around the world."[15]

"The federal government did have the power and the means to acquire and transfer the golf-course lands to the Mohawks before July 11," Ciaccia writes. "If this had been done, there would have been no police raid and the conflict would have ended before it began."[16]

14 "Crisis Inspired Many Native People," *First Nations Drum*, Fall 2000. http://www.firstnationsdrum.com/fall2000/hist_oka.htm.

15 John Ciaccia, quoted in "Standoff at Oka." http://history.cbc.ca/history/webdriver?MIval=EpisContent&series_id=1&episode_id=17&chapter_id=2&page_id=2&lang=E.

16 CBC News, "Oka Crisis Ottawa's Fault: Ciaccia," 10 July 2000. http://www.cbc.ca/news/story/2000/07/10/ciaccia000710.html.

Figure 17-8 ▲

Members of the Listuguj Mi'kmaq First Nation demonstrate in support of the Kanien'kehá:ka of Kanawake and Kanesatake at their reserve near Pointe-a-la-Croix, Québec, 29 August 1990. During this demonstration, effigies of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Premier Robert Bourassa were burned, and signs were painted saying: "Quebec is Indian land Micmac Mohawk."

1. Work with other students to identify the main groups involved in the Oka Crisis, their perspectives, and the role that each group played. Refer to the Web Link for more information about these perspectives and positions. Describe how the Oka Crisis influenced both First Nations' national identity and Canadian national identity.
2. Research how the Oka Crisis affected the actions of other First Nations, Inuit, and Métis with regard to land claims.

Pause and Reflect

What effect might a group like the FNC have on Canada's national identity? What impact might it have on First Nations' national identity?

The Oka Crisis is an example of a situation in which groups were galvanized into action over a particular event, calling into question different perspectives on national identity. Many Aboriginal organizations, however, promote national identity on an ongoing basis, such as the First Nations Centre (FNC), a national organization founded in 2001. The FNC actively works with a wide variety of groups and governmental organizations, including the National Aboriginal Health Organization, to attend to health and welfare issues affecting First Nation, Métis, and Inuit people in Canada.

Visit the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website for more information about projects in which the First Nations Centre is involved.

Explore the Issues

1. In this section you have explored the contributions of different groups to national identity in Canada. Form a talking circle and discuss other groups—local, regional, national, and international—that you feel have affected your national identity.
2. As a group, choose a nation within Canada and research and identify its national symbols and stories. What do these symbols and stories reveal about the group's national identity? How do these symbols and stories relate to a Canadian national identity?
3. Choose a significant issue related to the rights and freedoms of Canadians. For example, the internment of the Japanese-Canadians; the treatment of Hutterites, Mennonites, and/or Old Believers; the struggle for universal suffrage; or wearing religious and ceremonial dress in school and in the RCMP. Using your library, the Internet, and skills from the Skill Path in Chapter 16, explore the issue. Be sure to appropriately cite where data comes from and, if you are using the Internet, when you collected it. Prepare a document that summarizes the issue and relates it to the evolution of national identity in Canada.

Institutions and Governments Promoting A Canadian National Identity

Question for Inquiry

- **How do institutions and governments promote a national identity?**

In the first section of this chapter you looked at how individuals and groups promote national identity. Now, you will turn your attention to the role of institutions and governments in promoting a national identity. While foundations such as The Dominion Institute and the CRB Foundation promote awareness of Canadian history and culture, government departments such as the Department of Heritage are responsible for promoting policies and programs that link Canadians and promote a Canadian identity. The final example discussed in this chapter is a Canadian government policy that is perceived by many as a potent symbol of a common Canadian national identity at home and on the world stage: peacekeeping.

The Dominion Institute provides many programs and events to help engage "youth and all Canadians in learning about our history, shared citizenship, and democratic institutions and values."[17] It was formed in 1997 by a group of young professionals who were concerned about the erosion of "a common memory and **civic identity**" in Canada.[18] It organizes various speaker series—for example, featuring immigrants, refugees, veterans, and scholars—with regard to the themes of memory, identity, and democracy. It also has many youth-focused projects, including a national essay writing contest and the Our Story—Aboriginal Writing Challenge, in which students are encouraged to write about "the defining moments in history that have shaped this country [Canada] and its Aboriginal people."[19]

The CRB Foundation, founded in 1986 by Andrea and Charles Bronfman, is one of many organizations that seeks, among other goals, to "enhance ***Canadianism***." To do this, the foundation creates programs that "revolve around a series of television "docu-minutes", dramatic representations of important, yet often little-known people and events in Canadian history. Youth programmes are also supported."[20]

The CRB Foundation in turn has created the Historica Foundation, which pledges to

> *carry out its mission by encouraging the best possible Canadian history education and by providing or supporting programs and resources that*

Web Link

To learn more about the activities and projects that the Department of Canadian Heritage supports, follow the link the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website.

civic identity: a sense of individual responsibility to the community or collective; it emphasizes the idea that every citizen should do his or her part in making the community a better place to live, a sentiment that also extends toward responsibility for the nation

Web Link

To view some of the historical video performances created by Historica, follow the link on the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website.

17 The Dominion Institute, "Programs." http://www.dominion.ca/programs.
18 The Dominion Institute, "About." http://www.dominion.ca/about.htm.
19 From: http://www.our-story.ca/youthWriting.html.
20 From: http://www.fundersonline.org/orpheusprofile.asp?AN=CRBF001.

inspire Canadians to explore their history. In carrying out its mission, Historica is committed to working in all provinces and territories, in both French and English, and with organizations and individuals of all origins.[21]

Government Participation in Promoting National Identity

The Department of Canadian Heritage funds research, writing, and sharing of ideas that affect Canada's identity. It is the mission of Canadian Heritage to make Canada "a more cohesive and creative country."[22] As such, it is responsible for national policies and programs that promote Canadian content; foster cultural participation, active citizenship, and participation in Canada's civic life; and strengthen connections among Canadians. Are you aware of any local activities or projects funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage?

The Canadian government has directly influenced and promoted Canadian culture through myriad policies and activities. It provides funding—including grants, and in some cases, loan or loan guarantees—to different groups for this purpose. The government also sponsors related activities for youth, such as the Mathieu Da Costa Challenge sponsored by the Department of Canadian Heritage. Through the challenge, youth are encouraged "to discover how diversity has shaped Canada's history and the important role that pluralism plays in Canadian society."[23]

In addition, the government funds arts projects, museums, and other cultural activities. One such cultural event is the Edmonton Heritage Festival, which is linked to Alberta's Heritage Day in early August. Edmonton's Heritage Festival celebrates multiculturalism and has been running for 32 years. It enjoyed a record attendance in 2006, with 370 000 to 420 000 people visiting the 58 different pavilions. This event is possible due to government sponsorship and support, which means that municipal, provincial, and federal tax dollars were used.

Fast Facts

The Department of Canadian Heritage is composed of five sectors: Citizenship and Heritage, Cultural Affairs, International and Intergovernmental Affairs and Sport, Planning and Corporate Affairs, and Public Affairs and Communications. Which of these departments do you think might have had a role to play in each of the events discussed in this chapter?

Web Link

For more details on the Mathieu Da Costa Challenge, including information on how to enter, follow the link on the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website.

Web Link

Visit the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website and follow the link to read more about the Edmonton Heritage Festival.

Figure 17-9

Three-year-old Oria Barrnes bangs on a West African sengbe drum during the Edmonton Heritage Festival, 5 August 2001. The festival has more than 50 pavilions showcasing cultures from around the world. To what extent should governments use public funds to support Canadian identity? What groups might react negatively or positively to this question? For what reasons? What is your position on this question? Why?

21 "About Historica." http://www.histori.ca/default.do?page=.about_index.

22 Heritage Canada, "Canadian Arts and Heritage Sustainability Program."http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/pcapc-cahsp/02_e.cfm.

23 Canadian Heritage, "About the Mathieu Da Costa Challenge," 18 January 2008. http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/mathieudacosta/contest/about_e.cfm.

Peacekeeping: Part of Canada's Legacy and Identity

INVESTIGATION

Something to Think About: To what extent is promoting a common Canadian national identity linked to peacekeeping?

An Example: In 1956, Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester B. Pearson proposed the deployment of an international peacekeeping force under the United Nations flag to restore peace to the Suez region. Pearson would go on to receive a Nobel Prize for his efforts, and Canada would become a dominant peacekeeping force in the second half of the 20th and into the 21st century, participating in over 50 missions. Over the years, peacekeeping evolved into three distinct categories: assisting in the maintenance of ceasefires, the implementation of comprehensive settlements, and the protection of humanitarian operations.[24]

Figure 17-10

The Suez region

A Future Prime Minister Speaks:

Figure 17-11

Lester Pearson displays the Nobel Peace Prize presented to him in Oslo, Norway, 10 December 1956. Pearson later served as Prime Minister of Canada between 1963 and 1968.

> *We need action not only to end the fighting but to make the peace … My own government would be glad to recommend Canadian participation in such a United Nations force, a truly international peace and police force.*[25]

These words, spoken by Pearson on 2 November 1956, were placed on the 1992 peacekeeping monument *Reconciliation*, erected in Ottawa, immortalizing them in Canadian history.

There has been some criticism of Canada's participation in conflicts such as Afghanistan. Some Canadians feel that Canada's traditional role as a *peacekeeper* has changed drastically to that of a *peackemaker*, in which active military engagement endangers the lives of Canadian soldiers and civilians alike.

A News Story:

In his article "The Country the World Forgot—Again," Irish international journalist Kevin Myers, wrote:

> *It seems that Canada's historic mission is to come to the selfless aid both of its friends and of complete strangers, and then, once the crisis is over, to be well and truly ignored. Canada is the perpetual wallflower that stands on the edge of the hall, waiting for someone to come and ask her for a*

Fast Facts

Between 1991 and the end of 1996 alone, 24 new peacekeeping missions were created, 6 more than the total established during the preceding 43 years.[26]

Whose responsibility are international peace and security? What are the costs and benefits of Canada's participation in peacekeeping?

24 United Nations Association in Canada, *The Canadian Contribution to United Nations Peacekeeping*, pp. 7–9. http://www.unac.org/en/link_learn/monitoring/pkbooklet_e.pdf.

25 From: http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=feature/week2001/natnews/servpeace.

26 Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, "Canada and Peace Operations," 3 December 2007. http://www.international.gc.ca/peacekeeping/menu-en.asp.

Figure 17-12

This map shows the extent of peacekeeping operations in the world today. From July 1950 to December 2007, over 190 Canadian peacekeepers were killed in action.[27]

UN Mission in the Sudan
UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UN Interim Force in Lebanon
UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UN Observer Mission in Georgia
UN Disengagement Observer Force at the Israeli-Syrian border
UN Truce Supervision Organization in the Middle East
UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti
UN Mission in Liberia
UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad
African Union/ UN Hybrid operation in Darfur
UN Integrated Mission in East Timor

dance … Yet its purely voluntary contribution to the cause of freedom in two world wars was perhaps the greatest of any democracy. Almost 10 per cent of Canada's entire population of seven million people served in the armed forces during the First World War, and nearly 60,000 died … Yet the only foreign engagement which has entered the popular non-Canadian imagination was the sorry affair in Somalia, in which out-of-control paratroopers murdered two Somali infiltrators. Their regiment was then disbanded in disgrace—a uniquely Canadian act of self-abasement for which, naturally, the Canadians received no international credit. So who today in the US knows about the stoic and selfless friendship its northern neighbour has given it in Afghanistan? Rather like Cyrano de Bergerac, Canada repeatedly does honourable things for honourable motives, but instead of being thanked for it, it remains something of a figure of fun. It is the Canadian way, for which Canadians should be proud, yet such honour comes at a high cost.[28]

An Expert Peacekeeper:

The following excerpts are from Terry Allen's article "The General and the Genocide," based on her interview with former Canadian

27 Canadian Association of Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping, "Roll of Honour." http://www.cavunp.org/honour.html.

28 Kevin Myers, "The Country the World Forgot—Again," *The Daily Telegraph*, 21 April 2002. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2002/04/21/do2106.xml.

General Romeo Dallaire after his experiences in Rwanda as a commander of United Nations peacekeeping forces during the Rwandan Genocide in 1994.

> *"A young officer is entering a village," Dallaire recounts. "The village has been wiped out except for a few women and children still alive [in a ditch filled with bodies]. There is 30 per cent AIDS in that area. There is blood all over that place, no rubber gloves. Does the platoon commander order his troops to get in there, into the ditch risking AIDS, and help?" The question, it turns out, is not an exercise in armchair ethics. "When I asked the platoon commanders, those from 23 of the 26 nations that sent forces said they would order their troops to keep marching. Commanders from three nations—Holland, Ghana, and Canada—were saved the complexity of the question because by the time they turned around their troops were already in the ditch."*[29]

Peacekeeping Commentators:

There are some who have criticized traditional peacekeeping for various reasons. Such reasons include the hypocrisy of nations such as Sweden, Italy, the US, and the Netherlands, countries which condone the arms trade while advocating peace; the lasting damage to troop morale, as troops report on atrocities they witness and in which they are unable to intervene; and the ineffectiveness of the missions in addressing long-term problems.

Although once seen as the duty of good international citizenship, peacekeeping remains popular only in *safe* missions that are often oversubscribed. Critics, too, have pointed out that the demands on peacekeeping nations are increasingly resulting in the selective use of troops. In *Enforcing the Peace*, Columbia University political science professor Kimberly Marten comments:

> *In each one of these cases [East Timor, Bosnia, and Kosovo], peacekeeping fatigue eventually set in among the intervening forces. The states leading the operations wished to reduce their forces and save their resources for new problems that arose and appeared more central to their interests with time. The international community did succeed in ending the civil wars being fought on these territories … but occupation did not lead these countries toward … liberal democratic development. The idea that peacekeeping operations could accomplish such a thing in torn societies appears to have been a failed experiment.*[30]

Figure 17-13 ▲

This $10 Canadian bill includes an image of a female peacekeeper. While still fewer than men, more women are joining Canadian peacekeeping, and the government, recognizing the valuable role they can play, is actively encouraging their participation.

Web Link

For more information on General Dallaire and his involvement in Rwanda, follow the link on the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website.

29 Terry Allen, "The General and the Genocide," Amnesty International *NOW* magazine (Winter 2002). http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Heroes/Gen_Romeo_Dallaire.html.

30 Kimberly Zisk Marten, *Enforcing the Peace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 14.

The Changing Face of Peacekeeping—The Debate:

Dr. A Walter Dorn, who has worked on various UN missions and has written extensively on Canada's participation as a member of the United Nations, wrote:

> *In doctrine, the Canadian Forces leadership is replacing the time-honoured concepts of peacekeeping and peace-support operations with the "three block war," a term coined by a former U.S. Marine Corps commandant. It advocates combining peacekeeping and humanitarian activities with war-fighting, all in the same mission—an impossible task. An enemy-centered mentality is creeping inexorably into the Canadian military psyche. The previous notions of negotiated consent, impartiality and minimum use of force (formerly criteria for Canadian participation in peacekeeping) are being replaced by the more aggressive goal of "a high intensity fight" against the "armies of failing states," to use the words from a recent [Canadian] army poster.*[31]

Professor James Finan and Major Michael Boire, both of the Royal Military College of Canada, responded to Dr. Dorn's comments with the following statement:

> *Walter Dorn remains convinced that there is no life after or outside of the United Nations … Given the events of 9/11, even the die-hard Canadian liberal left has moved on to a more reasoned and responsible position regarding Canada's place in the world. Dorn has not. He is trapped well within the mystique of the blue beret, a mythological throwback to simpler times.*[32]

1. Do you agree that the traditional role of peacekeeping represents "a mythological throwback to simpler times"? Who would you side with—Dorn or Finan and Boire? Why? Whose view represents your perspective of Canadian identity? Explain.
2. In a small group, create a chart to summarize the views and perspectives of the speakers in this Investigation.
3. Using the perspectives included in this Investigation and your own research, write a position on the issue: To what extent is promoting a common Canadian national identity linked to peacekeeping?

Explore the Issues

1. Summarize the ways in which the Canadian government influences national identity.
2. Conduct a talking circle to discuss the following question: To what extent do you think government should be involved in creating or promoting a national identity? Remember to apply the skills you learned in this chapter's Skill Path for working in groups. SKILLS

31, 32 Steven Staples, "Marching Orders: How Canada Abandoned Peacekeeping—And Why the UN Needs Us Now More than Ever," a report commissioned by The Council of Canadians, October 2006. http://www.canadians.org/peace/issues/Marching_Orders/promises.html.

Reflect and Analyze

In this chapter you explored symbols, myths, institutions, and government programs and initiatives to investigate ways in which Canada's national identity is promoted. This exploration has given you a greater depth of understanding of the Chapter Issue: ***To what extent do individuals, groups, and governments promote a national identity?***

Respond to Ideas

1. Canadian artist Bill Reid wrote:

   Art can never be understood, but can only be seen as a kind of magic, the most profound and mysterious of all human activities. Within that magic, one of the deepest mysteries is the art of the Northwest Coast—a unique expression of an illiterate people, resembling no other art form except perhaps the most sophisticated calligraphy.[33]

   How does Reid's quotation link to the Chapter Issue: ***To what extent should individuals, groups, and governments promote a national identity?*** How might art promote a national identity?

Respond to Issues

2. In this chapter you saw that one of the goals of the CRB Foundation is to promote *Canadianism*. Develop a funding application form to be filled out by those seeking funds from the CRB Foundation to develop projects that would promote this ideal. Part of the form should be a checklist of features that you would want to see in the project to ensure that Canadianism is being promoted.
3. Suppose the federal government were to create a new department to promote and strengthen national identity. Develop a web page for this department that explains its mandate, the rationale for the department, ways it could accomplish its mandate, and opportunities for citizen involvement.

Recognize Relationships between Concepts, Issues, and Citizenship

4. Research and print a series of Canadian political cartoons on identity. At least one cartoon should be historical. Analyze and describe the message of each cartoon. Create your own cartoon on how individuals, groups, or governments promote national identity in Canada.

33 Bill Reid, quoted in Martine J. Reid, "Silent Speakers: The Arts of the Northwest Coast," in *The Spirit Sings. Artistic Traditions of Canada's First People* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1988). http://www.civilisations.ca/aborig/reid/reid01e.html.